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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the current status of foster care in New York City through an analysis of relevant research studies. The paper is divided into three sections. The first section summarizes the results and implications of five major foster care research projects based in New York City. Reviewed in this section are such topics as the characteristics of foster children and their natural families, placement experiences of foster children, a cost-benefit analysis, and changes needed in the areas of program administration, adoption, and preventive services. The second and third sections of the paper represent two invited responses to, and analyses of, these research findings. The second section reviews the implications of this research for the development of appropriate foster care programs and policies. The third section presents a discussion of the development of public policies in the areas of foster care and general child welfare. The paper also includes two appendices. The first appendix describes the five research studies on which the paper is based. The second appendix provides an annotated directory of groups involved in the provision of foster care services. (BD)

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# CHILDREN FAMILIES AND FOSTER CARE

## NEW INSIGHTS FROM RESEARCH IN NEW YORK CITY

*Edited by*

Beatrice Ferleger
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## FOREWORD

Throughout its history, the Community Council has considered as one of its basic objectives the stimulation of the utilization of reliable facts in planning human services programs and in developing public social policy. The Council's emphasis on the utilization of research findings and social data analysis has been heightened in the past two years as the result of a generous grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund which made possible the establishment of a Research Utilization Unit in the Council's Research Department. Among that Unit's responsibilities is the monitoring of new research findings and the identification of the program and policy implications of the facts presented. This current publication is one illustration of that function.

When the Research Utilization Unit began to put together the findings of a series of new research reports on foster care in New York City, it became clear that, given the complexity of that system, it was important to have this assemblage of data assessed by experienced professional leaders who could place them within their proper context. We were fortunate to have the Reverend Joseph M. Sullivan, Executive Director, Catholic Charities, Diocese of Brooklyn, agree to respond to the program implications of these data, and Professor Patricia G. Morisey, Director, Center for Family and Children's Services, Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service, to view the data from a policy perspective. Their papers provide an insightful and necessary accompaniment to the data highlights which were originally issued as a Research Utilization Brief several months ago.

In issuing this publication at this time, we recognize that we have taken only the first step in putting new facts to work. It is our intention to convene one or more Research Utilization Workshops so as to provide the face-to-face interchange known to be the most effective way to communicate significant information and to stimulate appropriate action. Meanwhile, we are happy to make this publication available to the widest possible audience of persons concerned with services to families and children in New York City.

Mrs. Leonard H. Bernheim
President

Bernard M. Shiffman
Executive Director

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# INTRODUCTION

By Mignon Sauber*

Concern over New York City's foster care system is not new. For several decades it has been the subject of intensive analysis and study. Legislative, professional and citizen groups have convened both at the State and local level to define the problems and to identify ways in which the system could respond better to the needs of the children and families it serves. The reports of these efforts could more than fill a library shelf. Why then issue yet another report at this time?

The answer is that in the last few years there has been an emergence of new and important findings from a series of independent, highly competent research efforts, which have studied the children in foster care placement, their families and the social agencies involved. In each of these studies, close examination of the child in placement, or the child potentially in need of placement, was a key element in the research design. Although each study drew its own sample of children, and the times of sample acquisition were not coincident, it was believed that the findings of these several studies would indeed be additive, and the combined force of the program and policy implications flowing from the convergence of these separate sets of data would merit renewed attention to needed changes in this city's response to the service needs of these children.

The first task, therefore, was to determine whether there was in fact commonality in the findings and implications of these separate studies. The Research Utilization Unit undertook this task and identified many areas where the findings supported one another. At the same time, it was recognized that the issues addressed in the individual studies were complex and could not be treated simplistically. Two conclusions followed this review. First, it was decided that a summary of the highlights of the studies should be presented in a format that would encourage their utilization. Second it was decided that two leaders experienced in the child welfare field, should be asked to appraise this aggregate of findings for their program and policy implications.

To make this cross study analysis available to the many individuals and groups concerned with foster care as soon as possible, the summary of study findings was published as a Research Utilization Brief (RUB) in June 1976. That RUB, with a few editorial modifications, is included as the first part of this publication. It should be stressed that these are selected highlights from the several studies and should not be considered as a complete summary of the rich materials available from these studies. In the effort to identify common findings, it is inevitable that the full scope of each of the individual studies would not be covered. Each of the studies, however, merits attention in its entirety by persons concerned with New York City's foster care system.

Not only is it important to keep in mind that the studies highlighted have assessed the foster care system from a variety of perspectives, but it is equally important to place that system in an appropriate context. This has

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been done by the authors of the two papers which form the second part of this publication..

The final portion of this publication contains abstracts of the scope and methodologies of the studies covered, and an annotated listing of some of the groups concerned with foster care planning and administration in New York City.

The Council has defined the role of its Research Utilization Unit as providing the linkage between research and practice, program, and policy, with the objective being the utilization of new knowledge for the improvement of human services. Although this publication places within the same cover new research findings and the response to these data on the part of two experts, the problems identified must be dealt with by the decision makers within the foster care system itself, or the legislative bodies and other policy makers who define that system, if there is to be any real change to benefit foster children and their families. We hope that both by its content, and its format, this publication will facilitate the achievement of that goal.

## RECENT FOSTER CARE RESEARCH STUDIES*

The recently published findings of the major foster care research projects listed below provide significant data on the foster care system in New York City. The first section summarizes the study findings; the second highlights suggested program and policy options indicated by the researchers.**

1. Bernstein, Blanche, Donald A. Snider, William Meezan, Foster Care Needs and Alternatives to Placement: A Projection for 1975-1985, New York: New York State Board of Social Welfare, 1975.

2. Jones, Mary Ann, Renee Neuman, Ann W. Shyne, A Second Chance for Families: Evaluation of a Program to Reduce Foster Care, New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc., 1976.

3. Columbia University School of Social Work Child Welfare and Family Welfare Research Programs:

   a. Fanshel, David, "Parental Failure and Consequences for Children: The Drug Abusing Mother Whose Children Are In Foster Care," American Journal of Public Health, 65 (June 1974), 604-12.

   b. _____ "Parental Visiting of Children in Foster Care: Key to Discharge?" Social Service Review, 49 (December 1975), 493-514.

   c. _____ "Status Changes of Children in Foster Care: Final Results of the Columbia University Longitudinal Study," Child Welfare, 55 (March 1976), 143-171.

   d. Fanshel, David and Eugene B. Shinn, Dollars and Sense in the Foster Care of Children, New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc., 1972.

   e. Jenkins, Shirley and Elaine Norman, Beyond Placement: Mothers View Foster Care, New York: Columbia University Press, 1975.

   f. _____ Filial Deprivation and Foster Care, New York: Columbia University Press, 1972.

   g. Shapiro, Deborah, Agencies and Foster Children, New York: Columbia University Press, 1976.

4. Fanshel, David and John Grundy, First Analyses from a Management Information Service in New York City, New York: Child Welfare Information Services, Inc. (CWIS), 1975.

5. Festinger, Trudy Bradley

   a. "The New York Court Review of Children in Foster Care," Child Welfare, LIV (April 1975), 211-245.

   b. "The Impact of the New York Court Review of Children in Foster Care: A Followup Report," Child Welfare, LV (September/October 1976), 515-544.

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*This paper was prepared by Mary Jane Cotter, Research Utilization Unit, Research Department, Community Council of Greater New York.

**Numerical references throughout the text refer to these studies. See Appendix for a brief description of scope and methodology.

## I. SUMMARY OF RECENT FOSTER CARE RESEARCH FINDINGS

### Reasons for Foster Care Placement

1. Placement of children in foster care reflects problems of parents (e.g., unwillingness to care for child, mental illness) rather than child-related problems in a vast majority of cases. (1,2,3e,3f,4,5a)

2. Data indicate that there are "socially approved reasons for placement" (e.g., physical illness, mental illness) and "socially unacceptable reasons for placement," (e.g., neglect and abuse). It is postulated that the foster care system may provide different types of services to clients in these two categories, perhaps stigmatizing those most in need. (3e)

### Characteristics of Children in Care

1. In 1975 there were nearly 30,000 children in the foster care system in New York City. (1,4)

2. Over the last twenty-five years the number of children in foster care has continued to rise; however it is projected that the total number will start to decline by the 1980's. (1)

3. The percentage of children in the age group 12-18 years has increased sharply and it is anticipated that it will continue to rise; simultaneously, the number of children under three years of age has declined precipitously. (1,4)

4. Almost half of those now in care came into the system when they were three years of age or younger. (4)

### Characteristics of Families of Children in Care

1. One or more of the following have been found to be characteristic of most of the families with children in care: low income, welfare status, low educational levels, single-parent, female-headed households, inadequate housing, member of a minority group, limited work history, illegitimacy, migration from birthplace. (2,3f)

2. Drug addiction and alcoholism problems were present for a significant number of mothers of children in care. Their children tend to be locked into care at disproportionately high rates. (1,2,3a,4,5a)

3. Many mothers of children in care suffer from emotional problems. For example, in one study sample, over half of all mothers were described as depressed. (1,2,3f,4,5a)

### Placement Experience of Children

1. The average number of years a child spends in foster care is 5.4 years; however, 20 per cent of the children now in care have been in care at least 10 years. (4)

2. As of October 1974, more than two-fifths of the children in care were viewed as inappropriately placed according to the judgment of experienced caseworkers-casereaders employing standardized guidelines. For example, it was felt that about 22 per cent of the children in foster homes should have been placed for adoption and none of the children in general institutions were appropriately placed (according to the criteria for placement used in the study). (1)

3. Casework services to natural parents of children in care are provided on a modest basis early in the foster care placement. Casework services decline the longer the child stays in care. (3g,4,5a)

4. If children in care were all in placements judged to be the best for them, there would be a serious shortage of group homes and residential treatment centers. (1)

5. Interagency transfers after a child leaves temporary care are rare, but multiple intra-agency transfers are experienced by a significant number of children in care. (3c,5a)

Factors Related to Discharge

1. High parental visiting was significantly associated with discharge of children from care. Investment of casework services in the natural family leads to higher levels of visiting. (3b)

2. While family contact is an important predictor of whether children continue in care, the age of the child at the time of initial placement is an interacting factor. Family contact was found to be a less influential variable in discharge home for older children. (5b)

3. The chances for return home for children were better during the first year of placement. Moreover, intensive casework services, provided during the first year of placement rather than services spaced over a long period of time, increased the chances for early return home. (3g)

4. The chances for return home for children were considerably better during the first year if the caseworker was experienced, i.e., had five or more years of experience combined with some advanced training. (3g)

5. Investment of intensive casework services in conjunction with homemaker and advocacy services cuts the number of days in care and spurs the early return of children to their natural families. (2)

6. About 3 out of every 10 children in care are possible candidates for adoption. However, almost one-half of the potential adoption caseload has not been freed for adoption. (4)

7. Court review* has had a cumulative effect in moving children out of foster care and into adoptive placement or to discharge home. (5b)

*Section 392 of the New York State Social Services Law (The Pisani Law), enacted in 1971, requires agencies in the state that are charged with the care, custody or guardianship of children to petition Family Court to review the foster care status of all children who have been in voluntary placement continuously for 24 months (amended to 18 months in 1975).

## Cost-Benefits

1. Cost calculations of foster care placements and alternative services are less than conclusive. The following data are estimates of the per child, per year costs of services: (1)

| Temporary Foster Care | Estimated Cost Per Year (in 1974 Dollars) |
|---|---|
| Foster Home | $ 5,200 |
| Group Home | 15,400 |
| Group Residence | 18,600 |
| General Institution[a] | 34,000 |
| Secure Detention | 42,100 |
| **Long-Term Foster Care** | |
| Foster Home | 5,200 |
| Agency Operated Boarding Home | 10,700 |
| Group Home | 15,400 |
| Group Residence | 16,500 |
| General Institution | 16,900 |
| Residential Treatment (care for mildly to moderately disturbed) | 18,000 |
| Residential Treatment (care for the severely disturbed) | 20,200 |
| Institution for the Retarded | 16,300 |
| **Alternate Services** | |
| Comprehensive Family Center | 900 |
| Casework Agency | 1,000 |
| Homemaker | 2,000 |
| Family Day Center | 2,000 |
| Day Care Center | 4,000 |
| Day Treatment | 8,000 |

[a] General institutions (shelters) provide congregate care for all categories of children. The costs of temporary care in general institutions are exceptionally high because much of this care is at public shelters which have high per child, per diem maintenance costs.

2. Results from a recent evaluation of the New York State Preventive Services Project indicate that provision of intensive casework services to families costs much less than annual foster care services. Substantial savings were achieved in the group of families studied. It was estimated that additional savings would be accrued over the next four years because of the reduction in time in placement of this sample of children. (2)

3. Preventive services, discharge to natural family and adoption can produce sizable monetary savings since they stop the cumulative rise in the cost of foster care. (2,3d)

## II. SUGGESTED PROGRAM AND POLICY OPTIONS

Research findings imply that substantive change is required in three major areas; some aspects of the administration of the foster care system, adoption services, and preventive services.

### Administration

1. CWIS, an information system which is beginning to provide sound data for managers and caseworkers, needs further expansion. (3d,4)

2. Development of more effective management practices within agencies is a priority. For example, there should be close monitoring of parental visiting and of multiple intra-agency transfers. (3b,c,4,5a)

3. Caseworkers' use of time should be reorganized in order to promote more intensive contact with the child and his natural family, especially in the first few months of placement, or at least within the first year, in order to increase chances for discharge. (3g)

4. To further enhance the chances of the child's discharge to his own home, more experienced workers should be assigned at intake to the most recently placed cases. (3g)

5. More community-based group homes and residential treatment facilities need to be developed. Consideration should be given to the possibility of converting suitable general institution facilities to residential treatment centers with appropriate programs. (1)

6. New funding sources for group homes and residential treatment centers need to be explored and generated. For example, Private Housing Finance Law - rentals in subsidized housing for child care agencies; Title XIX (Medicaid) - additional funding for residential treatment centers that treat seriously disturbed children; Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 - funding for community-based foster care; private foundations - funds for construction, renovation of group homes and residential facilities. (1)

### Adoption

1. There is an urgent need to discharge or free children for adoption through effective agency planning or court monitoring and review, especially those children who are no longer infants at the time of placement. (5b)

2. Staff training programs need to be initiated and/or expanded so that staff can be sensitized to the importance of adoption planning for children in care. (1,3b,3c,4,5a)

3. Techniques for recruiting adoptive applicants, e.g., public awareness campaigns and utilization of the Statewide Adoption Exchange, should be expanded. (1,3d,4)

4. The costs incurred by agencies in freeing and placing a child for adoption should be reimbursable in order to promote adoptive planning. (1)

5. Termination of parental rights needs to be strongly considered when children remain in long-term care and have no family contact. (3c,4,5a)

Prevention

1. Provision of preventive services such as: counseling, homemaker, day care, educational and vocational services to families in their own homes is a top priority in order to avoid separation and accelerate the child's return to the natural family (where appropriate). (1,2,3d,f)

2. Preventive services should be available to all without restrictive eligibility requirements. In addition, the structures, policies and practices of other support services, e.g., financial aid and housing, should be modified so that disadvantaged families can use them effectively. (2)

3. If a preventive services program is to be effective, caseloads must be small (10-12) and workers should be community based; provision of day care and homemaker services should be available on the basis of need, not financial eligibility; caseworkers need to become advocates as well as counselors; programs of early intervention with young families should be emphasized. (2)

4. There is a need for vulnerability research to identify families "at risk" and facilitate early intervention, providing alternatives to foster care. (3f)

5. While intensive casework services to families demands that an entire spectrum of social services be easily accessible, resources of individual agencies are limited. This suggests the need for "pooling of resources" of foster care agencies and "new kinds of collaboration across systems." (3d)

# PROPOSED PROGRAMS AND POLICIES FOR CHILD WELFARE BASED ON RECENT FOSTER CARE STUDIES

By REVEREND JOSEPH M. SULLIVAN *

Recent newspaper attacks, legal suits, the rise in juvenile violence and the deepening fiscal crisis have aroused public concern and citizen interest in the quality and cost of foster care services in New York City. There were relatively few research studies on the overall foster care system until Columbia University School of Social Work's landmark study, 1966-70. In the past three years there have been a significant number of important foster care studies.

In reviewing research studies on foster care services in New York City, there is always the disturbing awareness that one is dealing with the known - the number of children who are in fact placed. Presently, the foster care population represents about 1.35 percent of all children in New York City. The actual placement needs of all children under eighteen years remains a haunting question. Does the group in care represent the tip of the iceberg?

While it is not advocated that more children be placed, it is suggested that children are identified for care by such haphazard circumstances as the availability of resources and apprehension by the police. What assurances do we have about the parenting and care of tens of thousands of other children? One needs only to consider the family life situation, the state of housing, the neighborhood conditions and the educational problems facing the 600,000 children of families on public assistance to have reason for doubt.

For the most part, existing research studies focus on the children already in foster care placement. This analysis concentrates on the findings and implications of the studies listed in the first section of this report. Reference will also be made to other available studies and information.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAM AND POLICY

All the recent studies report that the vast majority of children come into care because of parental problems. Abandonment, neglect, drug abuse and mental illness are significant factors related to placement and seem predictive of the child's length of stay in care. Results from the Columbia University longitudinal study reveal that 57 percent of the children studied who were abandoned or deserted and 48 percent of neglected or abused children were still in care at the end of five years. Preliminary findings also indicate that children of drug abusing parents tend to get locked into the system.

The above suggests that agencies ought not only make a significant investment of casework services at the beginning of placement but also make a projected determination about the length of stay in placement. There is a need to correlate from the experience of all agencies the predictive realities of such behavioral difficulties of parents as mental illness, drug abuse and child abuse. Legislation

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recently enacted should be implemented immediately wherein a parent shall not be considered unable to maintain contact with or plan for the future of the child by reason of the parent's use of drugs or alcohol, unless the parent is hospitalized or otherwise institutionalized. This legislation would permit the termination of parental rights through permanent neglect proceedings if the parent does not maintain contact or plan for the child.

Reports from Child Welfare Information Services (CWIS) and data from the Bernstein study (New York State Board of Social Welfare) indicate the need for resources for older children who display behavior and school problems. There has been a significant shift in the age of children in foster care. The over twelve population increased from 5,585 in 1960 to 13,376 in 1975 and there was a marked percentage decrease in younger children. Recent trends also indicate that many of the children over twelve years of age are likely to be placed because of behavior problems.

In light of these facts and trends, the State Board of Social Welfare's study is noteworthy for its comprehensive assessment of differential resources, needs and its projections for the future. The expansion, however, of group homes and residences for adolescents will require significant capital investment, community education, recruitment and training of staff.

In relation to the study's recommendations regarding resources, I have considerable hesitancy in ascribing to the development of residential treatment centers as we now know them. There is danger of not taking into account cultural, social and economic factors in developing treatment models. Keeping in mind not only the cultural differences but also the fact that many of the youngsters coming into care have serious educational disabilities and are potentially non-employable, I would recommend that a group of experts from various professions and professional leadership from the minority community be utilized to develop new treatment modes for adolescents.

When one considers the trends and characteristics of the children coming into care, it is apparent that the deployment of manpower will be a critical issue. In light of the predominant Black and Hispanic population in need of care, a major effort is required to recruit and train young Black and Hispanic couples and professionals for the resources that are and will be needed.

While there has been a significant improvement in the efforts of agencies to move towards adoption, as the CWIS data indicate, there are still many children remaining in the foster care system, who are freed for adoption, who are in the process of being freed and who are identified as potential adoptees for whom there is no legal action pending. Subsidized adoption and other legislation aimed at facilitating the adoption process have been of real assistance. There are, however, three major obstacles: the courts, financial disincentives and staff training.

The court administrative process, calendars, scheduling, rotation of judges and so on, must be improved. Mechanisms must also be developed to keep the judges advised and knowledgeable of current legislative changes.

The Plan for Action based on the State Board of Social Welfare study addresses the problems of finances and staff training. It recommends financing the full costs related to freeing and placing children for adoption. It also emphasizes the

importance of training and retraining of staff, since practitioners in the field, even young workers new to the field, have problems moving from a foster care to an adoptive perspective.

The present system of payment acts in many ways as a disincentive. It is a system, as mentioned earlier, that is heavily weighted toward care away from the child's home. If one were to view this simply from a fiscal standpoint, the efforts applied to early discharge or adoption would avoid the incremental increases in cost in foster care that will be far greater in the long run.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Neighborhood Based Services

The State Board of Social Welfare indicates in its Plan for Action that foster care agencies ought to have other services closer to the high risk neighborhoods. While this would represent some improvement, it is unlikely that agencies which have a foster care orientation could be prime deliverers of preventive services.

The true concept of neighborhood based service requires that services be directed to the family and centered on maintaining the child in the home. While many agencies have adopted new models, what is required in terms of an intervention model is, for the most part, outside the experience of foster care. Foster care must be seen as an auxiliary service to the family - an interim arrangement. The skill in advocacy, the establishment of programs and the need for adaptations in counseling in a neighborhood require an experience broader than that of foster care. It is interesting to note that the study, A Second Chance for Families, which is an evaluation of the New York State Preventive Services Project, alludes to the above when it states that to be truly preventive, services should be offered through a family services unit. Comprehensive human service agencies which provide a range of services to families, therefore, would be more effective in meeting family needs.

### Publicly Supported Social Services

Of all families whose children come into care, "fifty-nine percent were receiving public assistance or supplementary assistance."* However, social services provided to welfare clients are less than adequate. The availability and quality of services to children prior to the placement decision is questionable although the need for such services is acute.

A Second Chance for Families indicates that there is a "paucity of services oriented toward the preservation and rehabilitation of families in New York City control cases." It is critical that the effectiveness of publicly supported services be reviewed. The specific questions that must be addressed are:

1. What services does the Department of Social Services actually provide the families of children who have come into care?

*Judicial Conference of the State of New York, Office of Children's Services, Juvenile Injustice, 1973, p. 75. This is a study of 431 children whose cases came to final disposition before the Family Court in New York City.

2. Is there a discernible difference in services since income maintenance was separated from social services?

3. What particular efforts are made in the Department of Social Services to concentrate on at-risk families?

Education

Demographic data indicate that a substantial percentage of the children in the public school system come from families on public assistance. These are largely minority children of one parent households. Behavior problems in school are a major reason for placement of children ten years of age and older. Juvenile Injustice indicates that 73% of the children studied were truants. This suggests that there is a need for significant change in the educational system.

Since many of the adolescent youngsters come into placement with serious educational disabilities and are potentially non-employable, I would recommend that a group of experts from various professions and professional leadership from the minority community be utilized to develop new vocational training and employment programs.

To maintain children in their own homes the traditional public school system must change its self concept. It must be much more community related. New models for teaching must grow out of the life style of the community and must be directed to developing the talents of youth to prepare them to become self-supporting citizens. The school must be seen as an institution that supports family life in the community.

Planning

The effectiveness of planning depends on timely data and critical analysis. Child Welfare Information Services represents a major and important development in foster care in recent years. The system needs to be refined to be an adequate mechanism for influencing decision making about children in care. The data base should be broadened to capture information outside the foster care system both prior and subsequent to placement.

There is a need for a comprehensive planning mechanism for the delivery of human services similar to the recently mandated health systems agency. The Task Force on the New York City Crisis* has worked closely with City officials to create an Office of Human Services Planning within the Mayor's Office. Although it is just beginning, the Office offers the possibility for better coordination and integration of services and the initiation of long-term planning for the human services field.

However, only when services are turf or neighborhood related, with significant participation from the local community, will they be effective in providing timely assistance and will the public be aware of the dimensions of the problems facing families.

*The Task Force is an ad hoc coalition of chief executives of 18 health and welfare voluntary organizations in New York City.

Legislative Policy

There has been a proliferation of legislation in recent years dealing with adoption, foster parents' rights, termination of parental rights and court review. One really questions whether additional legislation is required to provide appropriate services.

New York's public policy has been expressed in the Social Services Law, particularly Section 131, which emphasizes services aimed at self-support or self-care and maintaining and strengthening family life.

There is no doubt a discrepancy between State priorities as stated in law and de facto priorities. If one reviews the New York State budget, it is evident that funding follows placement, not prevention. The fact that $1.25 million provided for preventive services was cut by the legislature in 1976 demonstrates that legislators often fail to support policy priorities with appropriations.

What clearly is suggested is that legislators ought to balance their efforts to reform foster care services by not only promoting shorter stays in foster care but also by investing in efforts to prevent entrance into the system. Stated public policy and budget appropriations ought to be consistent.

In addition, the efforts of the Temporary State Commission on Child Welfare must be further supported. The impact of foster care legislation, particularly on the administrative functioning of the courts and agencies, must be analyzed and reviewed. In particular the administration of court review should be examined and more effective and appropriate procedures established. The Commission must also address the question of the courts' expertise in the area of social judgments more critically and objectively. Many of the problems confronting the judges are value-related and not legal issues.

Funding

The reimbursement formulas ought to take into account the need to make greater resources available in the early stages of placement.

A new approach to funding is required which accepts the family as the basic unit of care, not solely the child per diem per capita reimbursement formula, which is placement oriented.

SOME PRACTICAL SHORT RANGE STEPS

1. Further amendment of the New York Social Service Laws to authorize neighborhood services that preserve and strengthen family life with allocation of monies for families before they are threatened by the need for removal of a child. Priority should be given to "at risk" neighborhoods and neighborhood based services which have community participation. The Department of Social Services is empowered to provide these services directly or through purchase of service contracts.

2. Review of all A.F.D.C. families and an analysis of the services required to enable them to become self-supporting and self-caring.

3. Training programs for staff across agency lines to provide the skills for identifying and processing children for adoption. Adoption has become an extremely difficult process. Not only has the change in population required creative recruitment but the legal processes have become more complicated. The legal costs are becoming an obstacle to adoption. There have to be guidelines for legal service costs and procedures established for full reimbursement. Resolution of these issues demands the pooling of experiences of agencies and professions.

4. Agencies that have responsibility for care of children to have prime responsibility for the family. In New York City the families of children in temporary care in voluntary agencies receive services from the Department of Social Services. The fact of the matter is that the families are being evaluated by DSS to determine the need for placement; actual services are non-existent. Not only does this defy the findings of the research wherein early intervention and service delivery result in return home, but it produces still another artificial and unnecessary dichotomy in meeting the needs of families and children.

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

The report of the Eisenhower Commission* in the late 1960's indicated that there is a greater threat to our society from within than from without. Yet we continue to fund huge defense budgets and put ceilings on human services. It is imperative that the Federal government, which is responsible for the health and welfare of the people, provide the assistance necessary to reclaim the areas of the City which breed violence, crime, addiction and despair.

It is possible to identify some high risk areas by using the number of children in placement as an indicator. Other indicators should also be developed in order to identify these high risk areas and declare them "disaster areas." When a neighborhood is so identified, the City ought to be able to apply for disaster relief in order to bring about major improvements in the quality of life for such areas. This would include capital construction, aid for education, police protection, medical and social services.

Has the time come to consider a domestic peace corps of well-trained professionals who would create the environmental conditions and the support services necessary for the education and liberation of families who have lived in the misery and oppression of our urban slums? What greater opportunity could be given to this pool of talent than the challenge of rescuing a generation of youth from almost predictive failure?

The urban problem is a national problem and requires federal initiative. In large part, it is a problem of poor families and neglected children. Unless radical and imaginative national leadership is exercised in behalf of the vast number of troubled youth, the issue will not be placement of youth but potential social disorder.

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*Presidential Commission on the Prevention of Violence, chaired by Dr. Milton Eisenhower.

# POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF RECENT FOSTER CARE RESEARCH

By PATRICIA G. MORISEY, D.S.W.*

The policy implications of the recent research on foster care must be viewed within a context that goes beyond the boundaries of the foster care system. Account must be taken of social values and current public policy, since these determinants help to define the system.

Public policy today is itself shaped by controversy over social issues: the questioning of traditional institutions such as the family; the changing role of women; the demand for equality by minority groups. The debate generated by these issues contributes to a political climate that tends to reinforce weaknesses in the foster care system and to prevent or cripple efforts to secure permanency for children. Unresolved value conflicts weaken or undermine efforts to reintegrate children into their families and communities.

## Factors Affecting the Foster Care System

The development of a viable foster care system is impeded by dispute over issues such as: workfare vs. welfare for AFDC mothers; the provision of child and family day care; family planning; the obligation to provide quality education, especially for the retarded, the acting-out, teenage parents and the educationally disadvantaged; the establishment of community-based group homes, treatment facilities and alternative school programs; and the drive to "lock up" and "punish" certain juvenile delinquents.

Debate over these issues is occurring at a time when changing socio-economic conditions impact strongly upon the large population groups who are most likely to need family and foster care services. Socio-economic factors which affect these groups include: the persistence and tightening of the cycle of poverty for a significant proportion of the City's children; an increase in the number of working mothers, especially those with children under six; a greater number of one parent, female-headed families; increased mobility that has made the extended family unavailable for support and child care; and deterioration of communities where poor children and families at high risk reside. All of these must be considered in developing a workable foster care system.

## Public Policy--Obstacle to Research Utilization

The failure of public policy to provide economic support, health, mental health and other social services and to remedy weaknesses in the educational and juvenile justice sytems, is directly related to foster care's systemic problems. Research findings cannot be utilized to effect policy change unless this is recognized. For example:

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- Research findings clearly underscore the fact that, in the vast majority of cases, the placement of children in foster care reflects the problems of parents rather than child-related problems. But parental problems, such as inability to cope with children and emotional difficulties, are often caused by economic and social pressures which have not been dealt with by sound public policy or the provision of adequate financial support and appropriate services.

- Research findings indicate (particularly Fanshel's study) that parental visiting is a crucial variable in determining whether or not a child returns home. But neither the public assistance budget nor voluntary agency budgets include money to facilitate parental visiting, and funding cutbacks make it virtually impossible to allocate staff to work with parents.

- Research findings show that a disporportionate number of children come from Black and Puerto Rican families who are poor and live in deteriorated, crime-ridden neighborhoods. Cutbacks as a result of current national policy and New York City's fiscal crisis have undermined efforts to rehabilitate housing and neighborhoods and to provide the wide range of services that are needed.

- Research findings document the increase in the percentage of 12 to 18 year olds in care. This clearly suggests the need for the development of policies and programs of socialization, education, job development and preparation for independent living. But public policy reflects the resistance to the community homes and special educational programs which might break down the barriers to reintegration of these children into their communities. Rather, public attention focuses almost exclusively on the small proportion of youth who commit crimes of violence and largely punitive measures are proposed.

Trends and Developments

While public policy has failed to provide the structure within which the foster care system could be made more responsive and efficient, a consensus has developed in the foster care community itself on several broad issues.

- There is growing commitment to the view that there must be a broad definition of child welfare and that the concept of comprehensive child welfare service must be operationalized.

- There is growing consensus that the current child welfare system is dysfunctional and must be reorganized, and that efforts must be made to resolve the strains in the public-voluntary relationship.

- There is consensus that the system cannot change unless the basic pattern of funding -- per diem for child care vs. no money for community care -- is changed. In addition, new sources of funding through legislation, not "soft" money, must be developed.

- There is broad support among professionals for preventive programs which provide family services and are neighborhood based.

- There is recognition of the need for planning to assure more equitable allocation of resources (there is a lack of viable resources for Black Protestant and older children, for example) and to eliminate service fragmentation.

- There is recognition of the need to develop viable partnerships with other systems which directly affect children and their families, i.e., educational, juvenile justice, health and mental health systems.

The providers of service have been involved in a wide variety of activities dealing with some of these issues. The New York State Council of Voluntary Child Care Agencies (COVCCA), the New York State Board of Social Welfare, the sectarian federations, Special Services for Children (NYC DSS/HRA), and individual agencies, during 1975 and 1976, have been systematically examining issues related to optimal use of existing resources. Some agencies have been phased out and/or incorporated into other agencies, and programs have been modified or eliminated.

Several key issues are being addressed by working committees of COVCCA. These relate to developing more appropriate placements (utilizing an emergency home care network rather than institutional care for dependent and neglected children); service to Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) children and adolescents; the implementation of the 24-Month Court Review Law; and new approaches to adoption.*

At the national level, there are some promising developments. Bills introduced by Senator Walter Mondale and Representative John Brandemas propose financing a range of day care programs including after-school, part-day and all-day programs. The Javits-Scheuer bill calls for maternal and health care services.

At the State level, the Assembly established a Standing Committee on Child Care in 1975, which has jurisdiction over three areas: day care, child welfare and juvenile justice.

Federal, state and local departments are attempting to utilize Federal funds, such as Title XX, to help establish and institutionalize educational training programs to equip staff in the public and voluntary agencies to provide more effective and appropriate services. Professional and university resources have been tapped in order to operationalize these objectives.

All of these are moves in the right direction. However, many of these positive developments are either aborted or diluted because of systemic and policy problems.

Problems In and Out of the System

As a result of current national policy and New York City's fiscal crisis, there has been a cutback in the availability of a wide range of health, mental health and other social services. President Ford and Congress have been locked in a no-win battle over legislation regarding employment policy and jobs, the crisis in the nation's big cities, mass transportation and tax reform. There has been a cutback in services and horsetrading with expenditure of available money. In New York City, for example, efforts are under way to divert some of the $14 million allocated to

*COVCCA publications related to these issues are: Services to PINS and Adolescents: The Voluntary Agencies' Perspective, July 1973; Results of Survey on Implementation of the 24-Month Review Law, December 1974; Special Joint Adoption Project, March 19 Adoption of the Older Foster Child, December 1976.

the City under the special day care bill recently passed by Congress, and to substitute this Federal money for City tax levy money previously earmarked for day care.

The effort to establish community-based rehabilitative, supportive and preventive services has made little headway. Indeed in this period of fiscal crisis the "soft" money which had been available for demonstration programs has been lost. The development of group homes and community-based services has come to a virtual standstill.

These cutbacks occur with minimal ability on the part of those affected to arrest or reverse them. The recipients of services to families and children -- and the human services in general -- are in a weak position politically. They cannot compete with other departments for dollars which are in short supply.

On a systemic level, one of the fundamental problems is that few efforts have been made to effectuate a public-voluntary agency mechanism for developing a comprehensive strategy for planning and implementation. Recently, Special Services for Children (SSC) has been making an effort to identify the needs and resources of agencies in New York City, particularly in planning undertaken for the emergency home care network. However, the SSC planning process has been hindered by fiscal constraints and bureaucratic obstacles. In the case of emergency home care, other City and State departments have decision making powers and could modify the program significantly.

Because 75 percent Federal matching funds can be secured only after either the agency or the parent or caretaker has initiated a Family Court petition (PINS or neglect), the system cannot meet requests for service unless such a petition is filed. This process, and the resultant labeling, in effect discourages early intervention. This may, in fact, be one of the reasons there are older children in placement, since the system acts to discourage mothers from seeking needed services for young children. The system itself thereby contributes to the development of more serious problems.

Child welfare planning in the City is further impeded because the relationship of the New York State Department of Social Services to other agencies, such as Division for Youth, Family Court and the Department of Mental Hygiene, is unclear. Jurisdictions of these agencies overlap. Children are labeled as PINS, delinquents or acting-out, with very little distinction. The ultimate result is a fragmented, dysfunctional system on the local level. The role and responsibility of public agencies, particularly with respect to standard setting and accountability, has similarly not been defined.

In addition, recent child welfare legislation has focused rather narrowly on foster care and adoption issues, and in 1976 lost ground with respect to preventive services. This narrow focus is reflected in the fact that program guidelines and financial appropriations under the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 are not readily responsive to meet the complex needs of the older child in placement. The legislation proposed to deal with juvenile delinquency was primarily a response to political pressures, rather than a serious effort to deal with a serious and extremely complex social issue.

In the City, in the fall of 1976, the educational system is able to provide even fewer of the services that might prevent placement. The cutbacks in Bureau of Child Guidance personnel, the reduction of counseling services offered in the schools, the planned phasing out of schools for pregnant teenagers, and the constant reshifting of teachers to accommodate to the seniority system, mean that early identification and intervention become less likely.

Policy Implications - Needed Changes

It becomes clear that while limited programmatic changes may be possible within the foster care system, basic change cannot occur unless national priorities and policies are reconsidered.

A minimum standard of living must be provided for families with children through adequate levels of Social Security, family allowances (which entails a basic change in the AFDC-public assistance program), a full employment policy (including equity for female workers), and the establishment of minimum wages at levels which will lift the employed above the poverty level.

Health and mental health services which are accessible to poor families and children and have the appropriate mix of programs (including education as well as the range of treatment strategies), must be developed. The right of poor families to family planning services and abortion must be reaffirmed.

Day care and homemaker services can no longer be viewed as services of last resort, i.e., to be used in cases of illness or family breakdown. These programs must be expanded so that they are available as support services to strengthen families at risk because of personal or psychological reasons and to enable families to break out of the cycle of poverty. After-school services are needed for these reasons, and also to provide a viable alternative for children at risk of placement because of their own behavioral or emotional problems.

The educational system must be charged with the responsibility of being responsive to the needs of the various population groups it is obligated to serve. The public should no longer tolerate a policy which in effect "pushes out" a significant number of children who then are pushed into the foster care and juvenile justice systems.

The shift to support of such services will require a major change in values and policies, as well as the reorganization of agencies, service delivery patterns, and professional and staff development. There can be no real change and no "prevention" unless there is positive resolution of these basic issues and systemic problems.

Conclusions

Policy decisionmakers must address themselves to a rethinking and redefinition of child welfare and family policy in this country. Objectives should be clearly stated and measured against existing reality.

If adoption is a desirable goal, it must be recognized that mandated planning for permanency and legislation for court review and for termination of parental rights can benefit only a select group of children in foster care. The characteristics of large groups of children in care -- age, educational and emotional problems, ethnic background -- suggest that there is little likelihood of adoption unless there are changes in the community systems which tend to exacerbate their problems, and unless there is an increase in appropriate and effective support services.

Similarly, if keeping a family intact and stable and the prevention of placement are the goals, they can be accomplished only through the provision of the kinds of support services which have been attacked and reduced in the wake of fiscal cutbacks.

If integration of the system is an objective, it must be recognized that policy and program changes related to the placement experience of children -- discharge, planning for permanency and/or adoption -- as well as general restructuring of the system, cannot be achieved solely through legislation, fiscal penalties or incentives, or administrative fiat. A mechanism for institutionalizing a viable public-voluntary partnership must be developed which can provide an instrument for dealing with the bureaucratic problems, fragmentation and disincentives for appropriate planning and coordination.

Current research efforts have helped to explicate some of the administrative and policy factors which have implications for the foster care system. It is important that researchers now respond to the new areas of investigation which have been created by prevailing social policy and fiscal problems.

There has been, for example, a strong drive toward deinstitutionalization of children. Is this really best for all children? Might not placement in a foster care home sever the child's family relationship more than institutional placement?

There is also a trend toward establishment of group homes. How does location affect the chances of a child returning home? What are optimum staffing patterns? Is a group home setting advantageous to the child when it may be located in a hostile community?

Other issues that might concern researchers relate to the impact of direct legal representation of children on the family as a unit and on the parent and child individually, and the long-term implications of subsidized adoption.

Much of the research, up to this point, has focused on the child and on cost factors. Little attention has been paid to family and community dimensions. Researchers now have an opportunity, in cooperation with policymakers and practitioners in the child welfare field, to begin to articulate a more cohesive, consistent social policy for families.

## Appendix I

### FOSTER CARE RESEARCH STUDIES
Purpose, Sample and Methodology

1. Bernstein, Blanche, Donald A. Snider, William Meezan, Foster Care Needs and Alternatives to Placement: A Projection for 1975-1985, New York: New York State Board of Social Welfare, 1975.

Purpose

To develop data for the New York State Board of Social Welfare as a basis for planning the appropriate volume and pattern of services to meet the current and projected needs of children in New York City in relation to foster care.

Sample

Central to the study was a random sample of 1,250 case records of children drawn from the 29,730 children either in foster care or at home awaiting placement on December 31, 1974.

Methodology

Criteria for foster care placement and alternatives to foster care were developed. The random sample of 1,250 case records of children in foster care or at home awaiting placement was read by experienced social workers. The schedules completed included the case reader's judgment, based on these criteria, indicating whether the placement of the child was appropriate and, if not, the type of placement or alternative services which would be appropriate.

This information was supplemented by rough estimates of the numbers of children in psychiatric units of hospitals who needed foster care placement or alternative services. Estimates were obtained in interviews with social service staff of the hospitals. Probation workers in the Department of Probation indicated, on the basis of the study criteria for placement, the number of children in their caseloads needing placement or alternative services.

The projections of the need for foster placement in 1980 and 1985 were based on projections of the population of children under 18, by age and ethnic group, and on past and projected trends in the proportion of children requiring foster care placement.

The current service deficit was derived by subtracting the number of places needed in each kind of service from the places actually available. Costs of each type of care were estimated from actual expenditures and the per child, per diem rates for each type of care. Potential funding sources were examined and recommendations were made to meet the service deficit.

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2. Jones,Mary Ann, Renee Neuman, Ann W. Shyne, A Second Chance for Families: Evaluation of a Program to Reduce Foster Care, New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc., 1976.

Purpose

To study the effectiveness of a demonstration project which provided intensive casework services, supplemented by day care, homemaker and vocational/educational services, in averting or shortening foster care placement.

Sample

The sample was made up of approximately 550 families with at least one child under 14 who was either in foster care or was judged by social service workers as likely to enter such care in the absence of intensive family services.

Methodology

An experimental research design, which had been established on the basis of special state legislation, was applied in the service demonstrations in seven voluntary agencies in New York City and two public child welfare agencies in Westchester and Monroe Counties. Two-thirds of the eligible families were assigned randomly to the demonstration units; the rest served as a control group and received regular service. Baseline data were collected on all cases as well as service and outcome information. Social workers with a caseload limited to ten families provided demonstration cases with counseling, homemaker, day care, vocational/educational and information and referral services. Data were furnished by caseworkers at the time of admission to the project and at case closing or the end of the year, and data were collected on children's whereabouts six months later. More detailed data on service input were obtained through monthly service schedules in the experimental group. One year of the project was evaluated.

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3. Columbia University School of Social Work Child Welfare and Family Welfare Research Programs:

a. Fanshel, David, "Parental Failure and Consequences for Children: The Drug Abusing Mother Whose Children Are In Foster Care," American Journal of Public Health, 65 (June 1974), 604-12.

b. _____ "Parental Visiting of Children in Foster Care: Key to Discharge?" Social Service Review, 49 (December 1975), 493-514.

c. _____ "Status Changes of Children in Foster Care: Final Results of the Columbia University Longitudinal Study," Child Welfare, 55 (March 1976), 143-171.

d. Fanshel, David and Eugene B. Shinn, Dollars and Sense in the Foster Care of Children, New York: Child Welfare League of America, 1972.

e. Jenkins, Shirley and Elaine Norman, Beyond Placement: Mothers View Foster Care, New York: Columbia University Press, 1975.

f. _____ Filial Deprivation and Foster Care, New York: Columbia University Press, 1972.

g. Shapiro, Deborah, Agencies and Foster Children, New York: Columbia University Press, 1976.

Overall Study

Three separate but parallel research areas were pursued in this five-year longitudinal study of a cohort of children in foster care:

- Children in long-term foster care (Fanshel, a,b,c,; Fanshel and Shinn, d);
- Families of placed children (Jenkins and Norman, e,f);
- Agencies'services (Shapiro, g).

Sample

The three research components utilized the same sample of 624 children from 467 families. Criteria for inclusion were that: children range in age from infancy to twelve years; they entered foster care placement in New York City for the first time in 1966; and that they remained in care a minimum of 90 days, thus restricting the sample to children in long-term care. The cohort was closely proportionate in age and sex to the foster care population at the time. No more than two children from any family were included.

Excluded from the study were children entering state training schools, mental hospitals and institutions for the retarded.

The study design provided for a five-year followup after entry into care regardless of whether the child remained in placement or was discharged before the end of the projected study period.

Purpose and Methodology of Research Study Components

Children in long-term foster care (Fanshel and Shinn)

Purpose

To trace the degree and kinds of change which took place in children in foster care in New York City during the study period; to make internal comparisons between the children who left and the children who remained in care.

Methodology

Status changes were monitored by computer lists and telephone surveys. A variety of procedures were used to assess developmental progress: intelligence and projective tests; mailed questionnaires to caseworkers; interviews with parents; and reports from school teachers regarding school performance.

Families of placed children (Jenkins and Norman)

Purpose

To examine the conditions which give rise to the need for foster care and the interactions among child, family and environment; and to explore the concept of filial deprivation (feelings experienced by parents upon separation from the child). On the basis of this exploration to assess whether the way parents experience filial deprivation has predictive value in relation to the eventual return of their children to their homes.

Methodology

Home interviews with natural mothers, fathers and others were the primary source of data. Content areas included: experiences leading to placement, parental feelings regarding placement, experiences after placement, parental social attitudes and values, and social and economic background.

Agencies' services (Shapiro)

Purpose

To examine agency investment in terms of the effort and skill contributed by agency staff in helping children and their families over and above the basic requirements of maintenance; and to assess whether the quality and quantity of this investment was an important factor in bringing about improvements in the lives of these children and families.

Methodology

Data were obtained in telephone interviews with caseworkers at four different time intervals during 1966-71. During the first year, there were 858 interviews with 511 workers covering the work done with 98% of the study sample. Interviewing continued over the five-year period of the study and provided a reasonably complete picture of agency investment.

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4. Fanshel, David and John Grundy, First Analyses from a Management Information Service in New York City, New York: Child Welfare Information Services, Inc. (CWIS), 1975.

Purpose

To present data from the Child Welfare Information Services (CWIS) on the characteristics of approximately 30,000 children in foster care in New York City in a comprehensible and meaningful manner. Included is information on: age, sex, religion, ethnicity, reasons for placement, number of years in foster care, discharge objective, type of placement, and type of social services provided to children and their families.

Methodology

A standardized set of tables displaying data from CWIS forms A and B was designed. An accompanying narrative analyzes and discusses these tables.

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5. Festinger, Trudy Bradley

   a. "The New York Court Review of Children in Foster Care," Child Welfare, LIV (April 1975), 211-243.

   b. "The Impact of the New York Court Review of Children: A Followup Report," Child Welfare, LV (September/October 1976), 515-544.

   Purpose

   First study (a). To examine the effects of New York State's Family Court review of children in voluntary foster care placement for 24 months (reduced to 18 months in 1975), with respect to such questions as: 1) In what circumstances does Family Court determine that a child should be continued in foster care, discharged, freed for adoption?; 2) To what extent does Family Court agree with agency recommendations as to what is in the child's best interest?; 3) Does the Family Court proceeding have any effect on moving children out of foster care?

   Second study (b). To examine whether Family Court review of children in foster care has a cumulative effect on the movement of children out of foster care; the factors related to discharge, adoptive placement, and continuation in foster care; and agency compliance with court orders.

   Sample

   The original sample consisted of a total of 427 children placed voluntarily for the first time in 1970, who remained in care continuously for at least two years, and who were in a foster boarding home or group home at the time the agency petitioned the court for review. This sample included 248 children whose cases were reviewed by the court, plus a random sample of 179 cases who were not reviewed.

   For the followup study, 235 children were selected from the original sample of 248, all of whom had been reviewed by the court by December 31, 1973.

Methodology

For the initial study, analysis was made of intake data, family case records, agency reports following one year in care, agency reports following two years in care, and court dispositions.

For the followup study there was an analysis of agency reports submitted to the court in response to initial orders. An examination of Special Services for Children's records and files was made to obtain information on steps agencies had taken to free children for adoption and to determine the children's whereabouts in June 1975.

## Appendix II

## GROUPS CONCERNED WITH THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM IN NEW YORK CITY

A wide variety of interagency planning, coordinating bodies have been concerned with the child welfare system in New York City. In both the public and voluntary sectors, there is a commitment to develop an effective foster care program as part of a broadened, integrated system of child welfare service delivery. Some of the groups working toward this end are listed below.

### I. Voluntary Sector

1. *Child Welfare Committee, New York City Chapter National Association of Social Workers* is composed of child welfare practitioners who meet regularly on a voluntary basis to review child welfare legislation and formulate policy recommendations regarding the child welfare system.

   For further information contact: Carmine Magazino, Chairman, Child Welfare Committee, New York City Chapter NASW, (212) 683-4612.

2. *Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc.* is a children's advocacy group which operates through task forces and committees focusing on such issues as: children's rights, welfare, special education, health and mental health services. Recent activities include: an amicus brief filed in the Wilder vs. Sugarman suit, a Task Force on Social Services to AFDC children and consultation to legislative groups concerning child welfare legislation.

   For further information contact: Henry Saltzman, Executive Director, Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc. (212) 725-7940.

3. *Community Council of Greater New York* is an information, research, convening and planning organization for the social welfare community in New York City. Among its concerns are the problems of families and children. The Council mobilizes agencies and individuals around issues related to these problems. Crisis in Children Services: Action Proposal for the 1970's reports on a meeting held on March 19 and 20, 1975. The Council's research program has included a number of studies pertaining to foster care: Paths to Child Placement: Family Situations Prior to Foster Care; Trends in Foster Care in New York City: 1960-1973; Supportive Services for Families with Children.

   For further information contact: Bernard M. Shiffman, Executive Director, Community Council of Greater New York, (212) 777-5000.

4. *Community Service Society* (CSS) is concerned about the availability and quality of child welfare services in New York City. CSS is preparing an introductory policy document on foster care in New York City which will be available in 1977.

   For further information contact: Harvey Newman, Staff Associate for Social Services, Community Service Society, (212) 254-8900.

5. *New York State Council of Voluntary Child Care Agencies (NYSCOVCCA)* is a membership organization of 124 voluntary child care agencies that provide residential and day treatment care for children and adolescents who are abused, neglected, emotionally disturbed, retarded, court adjudicated delinquents or persons in need of supervision (PINS). The Council exists to provide a forum for ideas, a framework for planning and a vehicle for action for the New York State voluntary child care system on behalf of the children, adolescents and families whom member agencies serve through a wide variety of programs. The Council is concerned with: strengthening adoption services especially for the hard to place and older child, strengthening and broadening preventive services, improving the juvenile justice system, and in general, developing better coordination and planning of services for children and youth both statewide and in the various local social service districts.

   For further information contact: Joseph B. Gavrin, Executive Director, NYSCOVCCA, (212) 683-6000.

6. *Saving Families for Children* is a coalition of representatives from 70 New York City voluntary and public agencies most of which provide or coordinate the provision of family and child caring services. The primary function of the group is to advocate the provision of services which would prevent family breakdown and removal of children from their homes. Presently, the group is in the process of incorporation.

   For further information contact: Maurice O. Hunt, Acting Chairman, Saving Families for Children, c/o Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, Inc., (212) 777-4800.

## II. Public Sector

1. *Interagency Planning Committee, Special Services for Children (SSC) New York City Department of Social Services, Human Resources Administration (NYCDSS/HRA)* was formed in December, 1974 and acts in an advisory capacity to SSC (NYCDSS/HRA). The Committee is composed of representatives of voluntary child care agencies and related public agencies, and seeks to provide a forum for information sharing and coordination of services. Meetings are held on an irregular basis.

   For further information contact: Carol Parry, Assistant Commissioner, Special Services for Children, (212) 433-2323.

2. *New York State Assembly Standing Committee on Child Care* was established by the New York State Assembly in January 1975. The Committee reviews and develops day care, child welfare, and juvenile justice legislation. In particular, the Committee has formulated a number of bills concerning adoption, foster care and preventive services. The Committee's 1975 Annual Report details legislative activities; a 1976 Annual Report will also be available.

   For further information contact: Assemblyman Richard Gottfried, Chairman, New York State Assembly Standing Committee on Child Care, (212) 488-5740 or (518) 472-3450.

3. *The New York State Board of Social Welfare* is a policy making body of 15 citizens appointed by the Governor. Among its responsibilities are the inspection and supervision of public and private child caring institutions and agencies. A major study of foster care needs and alternatives to placement, completed in 1975, was the basis of a Plan for Action in which the Board outlines specific ways to meet anticipated foster care needs and alternatives to placement. The ultimate objective of the Plan is "to produce major shifts in the provision of services to children and families."

   For further information contact: Bernard Shapiro, Executive Director, New York State Board of Social Welfare, (518) 474-4357.

4. *The Temporary State Commission on Child Welfare* was created by the New York State Legislature in 1974, and mandated "to examine, evaluate and make recommendations concerning the scope, quality, cost and effectiveness of services now provided for children pursuant to existing legislation, judicial decisions and administration policies." The Commission's preliminary report, The Children of the State I, discusses the history of child welfare in New York, preventive services, termination of parental rights, adoption subsidy, and the statewide adoption exchange. A second report, The Children of the State II, describes the continuing work of the Commission.

   The Commission's Barriers to the Freeing of Children for Adoption is a comprehensive study of current adoption procedures in New York State. The report includes recommendations regarding termination of parental rights, the courts and the role of agencies.

   For further information contact: Senator Joseph Pisani, Chairman, Temporary State Commission on Child Welfare, (212) 488-4843.